



Student: Paul Thompson

Title of work:

Time And Relative Dimensions In Sebald: Time, space, and distance as phenomena, in W.G. Sebald's documentary fiction.

Programme: Literature and Modernity, 1900 to the present

Graduate School of Literatures, Languages & Cultures

University of Edinburgh

Word count: 14984

Chapter 1

Introduction: Phenomenality.

This dissertation is the result of a project, grounded in the consideration of ‘time’ in the core courses of the ‘Literature and Modernity’ programme, into how the narrator[s] of and characters in W.G Sebald’s documentary fiction experience time, space, and distance as phenomena. It will deal with three of Sebald’s best-known works: *The Emigrants* (1992) and *The Rings of Saturn* (1995) both in translation by Michael Hulse, and *Austerlitz* (2001) in translation by Anthea Bell.*

I acknowledge straight away that bracketing these three works together under ‘documentary fiction’ is problematical. Sebald himself was prepared to allow that label for *The Emigrants*, but preferred to think of *Austerlitz* as “a long prose elegy” (Cuomo 103) or “a prose book of indefinite form” (Franklin 123). Christopher Maclehose, Sebald’s publisher for *The Rings of Saturn*, notes that when the author was asked what category he wanted the book to be listed in, he said “I’d like all the categories,” specifying fiction, biography, autobiography, travel, history, and so on – “There wasn’t a category he didn’t require” (*Patience*). Scrutiny of the rear cover of the Vintage edition of *The Rings of Saturn* reveals that the eventual three maximum allowed categories were “fiction/memoir/travel” even though it is perhaps the least fictive of the three works under consideration; the two categories for *The Emigrants* were fixed at “fiction/history,” neither description really doing justice to either book. Mark McCulloh is content to categorise *The Emigrants* as documentary fiction (xvii), and Angeliki Tseti notes Sebald’s blurring of the boundaries between fact and fiction

* Permission was received in advance to study works entirely in translation, because of Sebald’s close involvement in the work of translation.

“to constitute an encounter between private stories and public histories [and] representations of personal narratives developing in the midst or aftermath of a historical calamity” (103). Lynn Wolff, who has written extensively on Sebald, challenges the idea that his writing can be categorised as documentary fiction at all:

Such intertextuality and intermediality [...] lends Sebald's works a documentary quality; yet, I would argue that his project differs from one of documentary fiction. The unmarked integration of quotes into the narrative, like images that are integrated without comment or annotation, reveals this fusion of historiography and literature that I see as unique to Sebald's prose; for it is not his main purpose to create a fiction that is historically substantiated through documentation. Rather he is problematising the writing process in addition to the standards by which we judge authenticity, documentary status, historical truth, and even truth in general.

(320)

In *The Grammar of Identity* Stephen Clingman coined the term ‘transfiction’ to describe Sebald’s “navigational form” of writing, declaring “[n]o one genre or mode is capable of capturing the truth” (188). However, the body of this dissertation will certainly show that there are sufficient similarities within the scope of the phenomena researched to justify selecting and bracketing these three texts together.

Phenomena are encountered and experienced at the moment that they arise, and choosing such experience as a title and subject for this project must therefore, to some extent, involve a phenomenological approach. It is surprising that such an approach has been uncommon in studies of Sebald. Derek Mitchell’s book *Everyday Phenomenology* uses Sebald as an exemplar of phenomenology, along with Gaston Bachelard, Hans-Georg Gadamer, and Martin Heidegger; but although he draws parallels, particularly between Bachelard and Sebald, the book in itself does not give a study of the author in the way this project envisages. Catalina Botez has written about peratology in *Austerlitz*, drawing on the work of Romanian phenomenologist Gabriel

Liiceanu, in a 2011 article in *Literature & Aesthetics*, which might be taken alongside Richard T. Gray's non-phenomenological consideration of the Roche Limit in *The Rings of Saturn*, inasmuch as both deal with the liminal or the limiting in Sebald. But apart from a dissertation in 2007 by MA candidate Megan Cawood at the University of Cape Town, who used Maurice Merleau-Ponty as a guide to *Austerlitz*, not much more work has been found that probes Sebald from a phenomenological perspective.

Therefore, whilst this dissertation makes no claim to be comprehensive, it does aim to open the door – or open the door wider – to further projects of this kind. It draws, for its guidance on phenomenology, from several sources. Firstly from Derek Mitchell's book which, while it is not a major work, has some useful insights. Salient amongst them, and relevant to the present project, are the concepts of "place," meaning a space that has a special significance for an individual consciousness, and "event," meaning a time or an instant that has a special significance for an individual consciousness (6). To these phenomenological elements I add two of my own coining: "object," meaning anything material or concrete that has such significance, and "vector," which term I borrow from mathematics, meaning any direction of travel that has such significance. Whilst I should point out that the fourth term does not necessarily accord with its usage by Gaston Bachelard when he refers to the "vectorial character of [Bergson's] duration" (*Intuition* 28), these terms will be used in the above senses throughout this dissertation. Secondly from the writing of Max van Manen who, although he does not attempt to turn phenomenology into a hard-and-fast 'method', is very straightforward and comprehensible in his exposition. Van Manen concentrates on lived experiences, which he describes as "raw: prereflective, nonreflective, or atheoretic" (812). His relation of these to Edmund Husserl's dictum "*zu den Sachen selbst*" – which he expounds as "turning to experience as lived

through” (811) – is very valuable when considering Sebald’s characters’ direct encounters with time and space. Thirdly from the works of Gaston Bachelard, who gives primacy to the instant above both duration and the linear perception of time, although Conrad Russell comments that, in Bachelard’s thinking, a discontinuous time which derives its dynamism from breaks and ruptures is more important than dogmatic insistence on the instant (6). Another major contribution Bachelard makes to this project is his skepticism for the very idea that phenomenology and literary criticism can go hand-in-hand. He says, in *The Poetics of Space*:

[...] the phenomenologist has nothing in common with the literary critic who, as has been frequently noted, judges a work that he could not create and, if we are to believe some facile condemnations, would not want to create. A literary critic is a reader who is necessarily severe.

(10)

This is a chastening caveat to the researcher/writer who wishes to push through a hypothesis or methodology come what may. Beyond Bachelard’s warning, phenomenology has long had an uneasy relationship with literary criticism, not least of all because of what Robert Holub, contributing to *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism*, calls its “protean” changeability (316). From Husserl, through Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty, Sartre and existentialism, Bachelard, etc., and on to modern phenomenologists such as van Manen, the discipline – if it can be called such – has undergone profound changes and been subject to much criticism, particularly at the hands of poststructuralism. Holub speaks of phenomenology’s “perceived limitations,” and says: “Although criticism that calls itself phenomenological may continue [...] the connection with the project Husserl developed during the first third of the [twentieth] century has all but vanished” (318). However, Bachelard’s granting primacy to the instant, to “the onset of the image” (4), and to “the phenomenological doublet of resonances and repercussions” (7) will prove to be useful, as it informs my

own position: that, without implying dualism, human consciousness does not deal with the totality of reality, but encounters a continuous sequence of phenomena which may bear a relationship to reality, but that relationship is neither measurable nor necessarily constant. Further, that each instantaneous encounter is a threshold to an unpredictable menu of what I call ‘associations’, cognate with Bachelard’s ‘resonances’ but with the additional nuance that the relationship between a phenomenon and what it evokes is not necessarily appreciable and may well be arcane. Thus the phenomenological experience seems to have moved on from the “unbroken succession of situations” and from the “slide from one encounter to another” (Heidegger 92), to the possibility of associations that are startlingly disruptive. This dissertation aims, by giving priority to examining the texts, to show the ‘threshold’ nature of the instant in Sebald.

Though this dissertation has an underlying structure, and is not a wholly phenomenological study in the strictest sense, its use of phenomenological principles means that it is more peregrinatory in nature than one might expect from a standard dissertation. This is in keeping with the intention to open possibilities for further studies, however. In the second chapter, which deals with *The Rings of Saturn*, I introduce initially the challenge of concentricity to the perceived linearity of a narrative. This is proposed in Richard T. Gray’s 2010 article “Writing at the Roche limit: Order and Entropy in W.G. Sebald’s *Die Ringe des Saturn*.” However, I go on from there to challenge both impositions of strict order upon *The Rings of Saturn*, and to argue in effect that time/event, space/place, and distance/direction/vector disrupt, and are disrupted within, the narrative. Several episodes from the text are drawn upon as examples and typifiers. In the third chapter I introduce *The Emigrants*, and use the Luisa Lanzberg memoir to explore the immediacy and imaginative creativity of

memory, showing how grammatical tense is used to convey the experience of the instant. I then trace the encounters the narrator and the characters have with the unnamed 'Butterfly Man'; his identification as Vladimir Nabokov proves to be questionable, but is in fact far less important than considering each encounter as a phenomenon in its own right. The emphasis of that chapter is on the eccentricity of the characters' travel, rather than the concentricity which is challenged in the second chapter. The Fourth chapter introduces *Austerlitz* and the concept of the elliptical vector of the eponymous Jacques Austerlitz. It deals with the novel's apparent resistance to the expectation of a smooth transition from one instant, with all its associations, to the next. Austerlitz's theory of time is contrasted with his experience of it, and the chapter introduces the 'instant of aperture', a concept more in keeping with Bachelard's stress upon the importance of breaks and ruptures in time; the chapter goes on to relate the 'instants of aperture' to the apogees and perigees of Austerlitz's elliptical travels. Exceptionally, rather than simply being a summary and coda, the final chapter tests the basic hypothesis of this dissertation. It speculates whether the meticulousness of the creation of *The Rings of Saturn*, *The Emigrants*, and *Austerlitz* militates against a phenomenological study, and examines whether all the steps up to and including translation have helped to enhance or diminish the distancing effect of periscopy. It goes on to deal with how far coincidences can be tolerated before credibility is strained, and examines whether in fact they serve to heighten the connectedness between the novels, and the experiences presented in them. Lastly it touches upon the reactions of some notable readers of *The Rings of Saturn*. The Whovian wordplay in the title of this dissertation, of course, refers to the travels that the denizens of Sebald's cosmos make in space and time, how their travels are as unpredictable as those of the TARDIS, and how, as opposed to the interior of

that fictional vehicle, the interiors and places that contain them are often experienced as being far smaller than their geometric dimensions would suggest.

Chapter 2

The Rings of Saturn: Concentricity?

This dissertation proper starts with *The Rings of Saturn* purely because, out of the three main works examined, it is the one which is written from a first-person perspective. As phenomenology is, essentially, a study of first-person experiences, it is entirely appropriate to start with Sebald's least periscopic work. As it is ostensibly a description of a walking tour of Suffolk – an undertaking with a starting point and a destination – a similarly linear narrative line might be expected, taking in the few weeks after the “dog days” (3). Indeed this linearity could be extended to cover the term of a life, starting with a period when the narrator is, for once, momentarily “carefree” as an infant might be, and relieved of the matters of work that had dominated his adult consciousness (ibid.), and ending with a lost entry in Thomas Browne's *Pseudodoxia Epidemica* describing the covering of all images of landscapes, fruits of the field, or people, in a house where a life had ended (296). This notion of linearity, however, is challenged straight away by another, that of concentricity.

The semiotics of the image of Saturn with its rings are simple – they declare this concentricity. Sebald chose, for the title of his 1995 oeuvre, four words which instantly convey that image. On an unnumbered page in the paratext he included, as one of his epigraphs, a few words from the *Brockhaus Encyclopaedia* describing the probable formation of the planetary rings from a disintegrated moon. At the end of the excerpt there is a reference to a further entry in the encyclopaedia, citing simply “→ Roche limit,” being the point at which the gravitational force of a body tends to overwhelm the integrity of a satellite, causing the latter to fragment, but that force is

not sufficient to cause the detritus of the fragmentation to fall out of orbit (Gray 39). It is upon this, along with a quotation from an interview with Uwe Pralle in which Sebald says “die äußeren Kreise determinieren immer die inneren” (ibid.: “the outer rings always set the limit of the inner”), that Richard T. Gray appears to base his chronological* interpretation of Sebald, maintaining that behind Sebald’s singular obsession with decline and destruction (ibid.) lies an ordering principle. In *The Rings of Saturn*, says Gray:

[...] the focus on destruction and disorder is continually counterbalanced by an insistence on order and by often extremely subtle forms of organization. Sebald’s theme, as well as the structure of his text, can best be conceived in terms of a system that naturally tends toward entropy, but which yet attains relative equilibrium through the strategic application of specific ordering principles, in particular repetition, periodicity, and — understood literally — co-incidence. In Sebald’s case, this dynamic of order and disorder *appears* to be weighted more toward the negative extreme of decomposition and decline for the simple reason that he approaches traditional principles of rational order and systematic organization with a profound skepticism [...]

(40)

Gray concedes that there is disorder, but the pointed italicisation of the word “appears” is intended to convey that the disorder is superficial, and subordinate to an underlying order. His contention is that the narrator’s journey “along the coastline of Suffolk emblematically choreograph[s] the traversal of just such a liminal, contested space, between the stability of terra firma and the destructive tidal forces of the sea,” and that “Sebald suggests that his narrator’s traversal [...] represents a structural reiteration of the orbital path followed by the rings of Saturn” (43).

* Cronology, in this context, is defined as the study of the planet Saturn, ‘Cronus’ being equivalent to Saturn in Greek mythology.

However, notwithstanding the quotation from the *Brockhaus Encyclopaedia*, which is a layman's explanation, Sebald does not claim to be an astrophysicist or any kind of scientist. *The Rings of Saturn* describes a pilgrimage – *Eine Englische Wallfahrt* in its German original – a peregrination rather than a scientific exploration, and far from all of it specifically on the line of tidal contest. Science may be incisive, and may belong together with other ways of considering or perceiving the human experience to build up the totality of that experience, but Sebald reminds us that “[a] walker's approach to viewing nature is a phenomenological one” (*Patience*), a matter first and foremost of subjective experience. In that experience each moment is a threshold, and not necessarily subject to an *a priori* structure for where it leads. As an academic researcher, Sebald did not rely on a systematic approach; his research was always “done in a random, haphazard fashion [...] in the same way in which, say, a dog runs through a field” (Schütte 47), and his photographs, some of which he placed in his books, were also collected randomly from junk shops and the like (Jaggi). It is valid to ask, therefore, why someone with a clear propensity for randomness chose to signal concentricity with such an emblematic title, and to foreword the book with a reference including an expression of scientific equilibrium. It is the contention of this chapter that it was to transgress them.

On the first page of *The Rings of Saturn*, where Sebald introduces the subject of the walking tour, the narrator is suddenly and violently wrenched out of the time and space of that tour and is “taken into hospital in Norwich in an almost total state of immobility” (3). The “expanses of Suffolk” had, he felt, “shrunk once and for all to a single, blind, insensate spot” (4). The narration has brought us the severest contraction of space imaginable, and the “once and for all” suggests that this immobile state in

this confined space is going to be the setting for a purely mental journey^{*}, as though this hospital room were the dense source of gravity – the core of the planet Saturn – around which the regular rings of what was to follow in the book were to revolve. However, Sebald’s narrator is peculiarly careless – even if he is not actually *carefree* – with the rigour of both linearity and concentricity. Dragging himself to the window in that confining hospital room, he looks out not on anything that could be thought of as being the next concentric ring, but rather into an entirely alien landscape, devoid of any reference to where he actually was, “as if I were looking down from a cliff upon a sea of stone or a field of rubble” (5). With appreciable frequency in *The Rings of Saturn* the narrator uses a phrase which begins “as if” or “as though,” signaling an approximate similarity to something. In doing so, he is answering “the basic phenomenological question [...] “What is this experience like?”” (van Manen 811), but equally, by stopping short of stating exact equivalence, he leaves the comparison open to further or different associations. The narrator is setting down an experience of time as a slide from one encounter into another (Heidegger 92) that negates Richard Gray’s declaration of Sebald’s “strategic application of specific *ordering* principles” (Gray 40, my emphasis). Max van Manen offers the following, effectively a rebuttal to the notion of system and order:

In contrast with the promises of systematic procedural analysis, the problem for phenomenological researchers is that such insight cannot necessarily be secured by means of a formulaic set of steps, or a recipe approach, and yet, phenomenological inquiry involves “method” but method and analysis understood in a nonmethodical sense.
(820)

The same can be said of both phenomenological writing and reading, of course, and the latter will be touched upon in the final chapter of this dissertation. There is little

^{*} Ian Sinclair does refer to *The Rings of Saturn* as “a mental landscape” (*Patience*).

evidence of the systematic or the ordered in Sebald's narrator's mental processes when, in fairly rapid succession within the discourse time of *The Rings of Saturn*, he admits that he "[...] couldn't help thinking [...]" about Kafka's Gregor Samsa, or about his own friend Michael Parkinson (5). Here the narrator's thoughts – will he nill he – freely associate, draw him away with a "multiplicity of resonances" (Bachelard, *Space* 7) from any ordered process. In terms of narrative time three years have been skipped within three pages, from the setting-out on the tour, via the confinement in the hospital room, to the assembling of the notes; but within the discourse Sebald has answered the challenge of phenomenology, which is "to recover the lived meanings of [each] moment without objectifying these faded meanings and without turning the lived meanings into positivistic themes, sanitized concepts, objectified descriptions, or abstract theories" (van Manen 812). Within the next three pages of *The Rings of Saturn* the narrator conducts us, via thoughts of Michael Parkinson, the outward-and-inward trajectory of his travels, his work, his modesty, and his sudden death, to the office of Flaubert-scholar Janine Dakyns (5-8) – the latter being a space filled with piles of paper and as confining as his hospital room – without losing any sense of the immediacy of an unbroken succession of situations (Heidegger 92) or of the lived meanings of any moment.

Outward-and-inward trajectories and partial trajectories, documented and imagined, do recur in *The Rings of Saturn*, of course – Sebald records his subjects' itineraries, Bad Kissingen to Regensburg via Denmark, France, and Italy (86), Le Havre to the West Indies (110), Marseilles to Newcastle via Constantinople, Yeysk, Lowestoft, and London (113). Indeed he appears to support, by citation, Thomas Browne's view that

[...] the history of every individual, of every social order, indeed of the whole world, does not describe an ever-widening, more and more wonderful arc, but

rather follows a course which, once the meridian is reached, leads without fail down into the dark.

(24)

Rather than endorsing the equilibrium of the Roche limit, however, Browne's quoted view suggests the inevitability of spiraling inward and downward. But escape from both this posited law and the Roche limit is possible, if only figuratively. In the section of the book which deals with the atrocities of the Ustaše as a microcosm of the Holocaust, mention is made of a minor bureaucrat in the Wehrmacht, stationed in Banja Luka, who went on to become Secretary General of the United Nations, and who, in the form of his recorded voice, is currently leaving the Solar system on board Voyager II (99), with a vector unhampered by the gravitational pull of the central body.

All these trajectories occur, of course, within the consciousness of the narrator; they are his instant-driven train of thought, his musings, even as they relate to the lives of others – Browne, the Brazilian natives brought to Haarlem to dance (83), Joseph Conrad, etc. Paradoxically, they disrupt the idea of a wander through the Suffolk countryside, whilst they retain a continuity with that peregrination within the pilgrim's consciousness. He notices a boat apparently motionless on the North Sea, then, distracted by the rising of the wind and darkening of the sky, he suddenly realises that the boat has gone, and his thoughts connect this both to Christ's calming the Sea of Galilee and his driving the Gadarene swine off a cliff (65-66). Such instants bring about irrevocable change, and it is easy for the narrator to declare that "[i]t takes just one awful second [...] and an entire epoch passes" (31). There are passages in *The Rings of Saturn* that seem to echo Henri Bergson's concept of "pure duration," which, he says, "is the form which the succession of our conscious states assumes when our ego lets itself *live*, when it refrains from separating its present state

from its former states” (Bergson 100). The waitress in a café who “may have appeared the moment I put down my knife and fork, or perhaps an hour had passed” (*Rings* 43); the narrator sitting by a lakeside believing he gazed into eternity (59); the periscopic observation that “[s]imply raising a hand, closing an eyelid, or exhaling one’s last breath might take, it sometimes seemed, half a century” (150-151). Each one of these, however, is dependent on the impression made by an instant, and the last one is followed by a procession of appearances – Bachelardian resonances in the narrator’s train of thought – relating to the Chinese famine.

Thus so much can be seen in *The Rings of Saturn* that is a personal encounter with time as a phenomenon, everything as an “event” (Mitchell 6), or as “multiplying conscious instants,” as Bachelard posited in opposition to Bergson’s *durée* (*Intuition* 50). The narrator similarly encounters space. He recalls how, in an “immense domed rotunda” (*Rings* 124) he viewed a diorama of the Battle of Waterloo:

This, then, I thought, as I looked round about me, is the representation of history. It requires a falsification of perspective. We, the survivors, see everything from above, see everything at once, and still we do not know how it was.
(125)

The space of the rotunda is contradictory. It is “immense” and appears to hold an entire battlefield, yet that appearance is achieved by the device of foreshortening, by containing a miniaturized battle in the constraints of a space much smaller on the inside than on the outside. The falsification of perspective is given the significance of the falsification of history – ultimately we cannot ‘experience’ history as such, merely look at its debris (Benjamin 257-258) – which in turn relates to Sebald’s own concern, the falsification of Holocaust history by collusion in silence about it (Schütte 46). Thus the space holding the diorama becomes a “place,” and the narrator’s experience within it an “event” (Mitchell 6).

Time/space as event/place come together again, during the narrator's peregrination, on the heath beyond Dunwich. He emerges from a thicket onto the heath and follows a track across it:

Lost in the thoughts that went round in my head incessantly, and numbed by this crazed flowering, I stuck to the sandy path until to my astonishment, not to say horror, I found myself back again at the same tangled thicket from which I had emerged about an hour before, or, as it now seemed to me, in some distant past.
(*Rings* 171)

What might at first seem again like Bergsonian *durée* – the perceived duration of the narrator's time on the heath before arriving back where he had emerged – is more evidential of a Bachelardian “reverie” (*Reverie* 29). The narrator is lost in thoughts, only partly conscious of time passing and distance covered, and these thoughts not necessarily the “masculine” state of mind (*ibid.*) of rational thought, but rather, as Derek Mitchell puts it in *Everyday Phenomenology*, “thinking in an unsystematised way not governed by the rules of empirical perception or scientific investigation [...] almost not like thinking at all” (82). Thus it is the intervention of an instant of astonishment and horror in that space where dense gorse and open heath meet that reveals its significance as a place. That significance leads to further associations, occurring to the narrator as real-time memories:

Only in retrospect did I realize that the only discernible landmark on this treeless heath, a most peculiar villa with a glass-domed observation tower which reminded me somehow of Ostend, had presented itself time and again from a quite different angle, now close to, now further off, now to my left and now to my right, and indeed at one point the lookout tower, in a sort of castling move, had got itself, in no time at all, from one side of the building to the other, so that it seemed that instead of seeing the actual villa I was seeing its mirror image.
(*Rings* 171-172)

Images of the villa with its dome, no matter how eidetic – imbued with hallucinatory clarity – those images are, afford some tenuous associations with Belgium, and

thereby recall to the reader the dome of the Waterloo diorama. Thoughts travel instantaneously and momentarily outside the immediate space; perspective, distance, and relative position change, contradicting each other and themselves. In order to break free of the heath, the narrator attempts to progress by rational observation, but, before he makes his escape, is overtaken by the irrational:

[...] I had no choice but to keep to the crooked sandy tracks and to make mental notes of even the least significant features, even the slightest shift in perspective. Several times I was forced to retrace long stretches in that bewildering terrain, which could perhaps be surveyed in its entirety only from the glass tower of that spectral Belgian villa. In the end I was overcome by a feeling of panic.

(172)

The domed building has an unreal, phantom-like presence rather than solidity as an object, a kind of “spectral materialism” which “serves to register and archive a certain real whose status is, paradoxically, virtual” (Santner 52), and thereby holds on to its significance.

Another encounter where the spectral, the historical, and the immediate coincide can be found in the section of the book describing the narrator’s visit to Orford Ness. He describes it “as if I were passing through an undiscovered country” (*Rings* 234). The intertextuality here is Shakespearean, the “undiscover’d country, from whose bourn / No traveller returns” (*Hamlet* III i ll.78-79) being death. The narrator, however, transgresses Browne’s law of the inevitable fall into the dark (*Rings* 24); he hires his Charon to take him over the Styx (233), but eventually reverses the katabasis when the same boatman brings him back (237). But as he makes his first few steps on the Ness, through a landscape of profound silence and emptiness, the latter matching the lack of conscious thoughts in his head and the former his growing sense of fear, he startles and is startled by a hare:

In that very fraction of a second when its paralysed state turned into panic and flight, its fear cut right through me. I still see what occurred in that one tremulous instant with an undiminished clarity.

(234)

The narrator claims eidetic recall of that instant, such is the vividness of the memory. Yet Conrad Russell, summing up Bachelard's understanding of memory, declares it to be "fictive", relying for its vividness on a creative process involving the imagination (Russell 14). Imagination, to Bachelard, is a major power of human nature (*Space* 18) "ceaselessly imagining and enriching itself with new images" (20). I suggest that the immediacy of the narrator's reliving of the instant of his encounter with the hare is best expressed by Bachelard thus: "By the swiftness of its actions, the imagination separates us from the past as well as from reality" (31).

Not until later – half an hour's narrative time – when the narrator's pulse had calmed down, does he begin to lose his sense that he is in the underworld. He approaches tomb-like structures:

But the closer I came to these ruins, the more any notion of a mysterious isle of the dead receded, and the more I imagined myself amidst the remains of our own civilization after its extinction in some future catastrophe. To me too, as for some latter-day stranger ignorant of the nature of our society wandering about among heaps of scrap metal and defunct machinery, the beings who had once lived and worked here were an enigma, as was the purpose of the primitive contraptions and fittings inside the bunkers, the iron rails under the ceilings, the hooks on the still partially tiled walls, the showerheads the size of plates, the ramps and the soakaways. Where and in what time I truly was that day at Orfordness I cannot say, even now as I write these words.

(*Rings* 237)

In this passage we have again the narrator's slide from one encounter into another (Heidegger 92) as he closes on the tumuli, the creativity of the imagination imbuing each object seen with arcane significance even though the overall impression is

enigmatic and time is compressed, almost annihilated. In this contradictory place, even distance is close to annihilation, as he looks back to the mainland: “The roofs and towers of Orford showed among the tree tops, seeming so close I could touch them” (*Rings* 237).

Before leaving the encounters with time, space, and distance in *The Rings of Saturn*, this chapter will deal briefly with one further, periscopic instance of the contraction of space. In pages 242 to 248, the narrator records a visit to Thomas Abrams, whose ongoing task is a scale model of the Temple at Jerusalem. Abrams tells him that “the entire work is based on ideas, nothing but ideas, ideas that change over the years,” and that often have to be abandoned and reimaged (245). Bachelard, seeing miniaturisation as a factor of space, would say “[s]pace calls for action, and before action, the imagination is at work” (*Space* 34). It would be easy to see Sebald’s miniaturist as deploying logical thought processes, as per Bachelard’s statement that “[a] geometrician sees exactly the same thing in two similar figures, drawn to different scales” (167). However, if Bachelard’s insistence that before Abrams set to work making or even designing his model, he must have imagined it, is combined with the assertion that “imagination in miniature is natural imagination” (168), we can assign to the miniaturist a knowledge of “intimate immensity” (201) and the malleability of the sense of space. The model-in-progress, sprung from the imagination, has since its inception and provisional realisation become an object with its own gravity, attracting visitors from all over the world (*Rings* 243-244).

There is much more to draw on in *The Rings of Saturn*, but the foregoing examples give a sufficient view of the transgressive nature of the work, and of the difficulty in conceding that it depends on system and method. To concede so after having seen so much transgression, would be to liken the construction of the book to

the military architecture of Antwerp, where the fortifications made their way steadily outwards in concentric circles until they came up against the “natural” limit of their usefulness, given the advances in military technology (*Austerlitz* 17). More important to *The Rings of Saturn* is its immediacy, which is achieved despite the book’s grammar being entirely in the past tense – in fact it is so immediate that it is easy to forget that the narrator told us it was created from notes collated two years after the peregrination took place. The next chapter, which deals with Sebald’s earlier novel, *The Emigrants*, will touch upon, *inter alia*, how verbal tense can be varied to express memory and encounters with time going back even further.

Chapter 3

The Emigrants: Eccentricity.

Writing about *The Emigrants*, André Aciman said “[...] Sebald never brings up the Holocaust. The reader, meanwhile, thinks of nothing else” (6). In *The Rings of Saturn* the ethnic cleansing of Croatia by the Ustaše and the peripheral involvement of Kurt Waldheim (*Rings* 96-99), as noted in the previous chapter, and a peripheral reference to Bergen Belsen (59), along with the reminiscences of a Suffolk man about the wartime bombers setting off from the East Anglian airfields (38-40), serve to highlight almost in passing Sebald’s dual concerns – the silence about the Holocaust and about the destruction of German cities by Allied bombing. In this chapter the focus is on the earlier novel in which, as Aciman notes, Sebald deals “[s]upremely tact[fully]” with the Holocaust (6) by featuring the stories of characters “*déracinés*” (Williams 68) from central Europe during the first half of the twentieth century, rather than those subjected directly to the full horrors of Nazi mass-murder. Sebald seems to be telling us, as subtly as he might, that they did not ‘escape’ but are equally victims with those who were murdered. *The Emigrants* is more periscopic than *The Rings of Saturn*, inasmuch as the narrator allows his characters’ consciousness to emerge; in fact there is an important sub-section in the novel where the narrative can be said to be third-hand – when Max Ferber hands the narrator the memoir written by his great-aunt Luisa Lanzberg. It is valid to ask whether this distancing from the narrator’s consciousness does anything to lessen the sense of immediacy in encounters with space, time, and distance, and the Lanzberg memoir, being the furthest back in chronological time, is a good place to start.

It is, of course, actually a first-hand and first-person account, not a third-hand

at all. The author's/narrator's reading it, is no different from our reading his personal account within the novel. Moreover it is not the only such excursion in *The Emigrants*, from the consciousness of the narrator or from that of the characters he meets or has met personally. Sebald also includes a lengthy extract apparently from the diaries of Ambros Adelwarth (*Emigrants* 126-145), and if there are actual second- or third-hand accounts at all, they are to be found in Lucy Landau's filling-in of the details of Paul Bereyter's life, and the similar detailing of Ambros Adelwarth's by Aunt Fini and Dr. Abramsky. The Lanzberg memoir is one of the devices by which Sebald "seeks to reconstruct a series of events which took place before his birth but which are accessible through neither purely 'historical' research nor personal recollection" (Long 123), specifically pivoting on 1905 when, for Luisa, childhood ended with her family's removal to Kissingen (*Emigrants* 207). This event can be taken to be emblematic of the general uprooting of people and peoples during the twentieth century.

The text slides almost unnoticed from the overall narrator's voice to that of the memoirist. Translator Michael Hulse signals the change parenthetically – "(Luisa writes)" and he does the same at a later point (194, 207) – where the original German text is subtler, "wie Luisa schreibt" being isolated only by commas, as is the later instance (*Ausgewanderten* 290, 311). Sebald's original construction appears more seamless, but he allowed Hulse's more disruptive rendering. Nevertheless it is difficult to tell precisely where in the English-language description of the route between Steinach and Bad Kissingen the transition from consciousness to consciousness actually takes place, even though it continues for at least a page in the third-person. It has certainly changed by the end of the first paragraph, where the first-person takes over. Luisa gives a brilliantly eidetic account – 'eidetic' as defined

in the previous chapter and as used throughout this dissertation – of being in her childhood home:

Now I am standing in the living room once again [...] I have walked through the gloomy, stone-flagged hall, have placed my hand cautiously on the handle, as I do almost every morning at that time, I have pushed it down and opened the door, and inside, standing barefoot on the white, scrubbed floorboards, I look around in amazement at all the nice things in the room.

(195)

This is not simply an account of the past, it is a memory occurring in Luisa's creative imagination in the instant before she writes it down, showing again that "before action, the imagination is at work" (Bachelard, *Space* 34). That instant both is a threshold, in the sense given to it in the introductory chapter to this dissertation, and significantly contains the image of a threshold – the door to a place, the living room in Steinach. The instant is both an event in itself and the onset of a remembered event. There is the sense of a precedent gloom leading up to that threshold, its having been lived through signaled by the present perfect verbs. The immediacy of the present and continuous present verbs reinforces the tactile memory of being barefoot, the brightness of the "white scrubbed floorboards," and the completeness of the roll-call of objects contained in the room (*Emigrants* 195). Poignant amongst those objects is the picture of her aunt, "the most beautiful girl for miles around, a real Germania" (ibid.). The immersion and integration into German society of its Jewish community is recalled not only by that "Germania" but also by unselfconscious references to speeches in praise of the fatherland, loyalty and service to the state (202-203), and so on:

There are no lessons today [the teacher's birthday]; instead, stories and German legends of old are read aloud. We also have a guessing game. For instance, we have to guess three things that give and take in infinite plenty. Of course no one knows the answer, which Herr Bein then tells us in tones of great significance:

the earth, the sea, and the Reich.

(204)

“Reich” has been allowed to stand in translation; it refers to the German Empire of 1871-1918, although of course it has more than a hint of dramatic irony in its modern association with the later German polity that was to sweep away European Jewry less than half a century after the events being remembered, and as the memoir was being written. Sebald allows Hulse’s translation to manipulate time, to foreshorten it in effect. Luisa’s recollection of the living room continues in crystalline detail:

The hoyá plant is on the cane table in the bay of the east window. Its leaves are firm and dark, and it has a lot of pink-hearted umbels consisting of white, furry stars. When I come down early in the mornings the sun is already shining into the room and gleaming on the drops of honey that cling to every little star.

(196)

There is a comforting glow to this passage. As Bachelard says: “When we dream of the house we were born in, in the utmost depths of reverie, we participate in this original warmth” (*Space* 29), and this is the essence of the warm, domestic “nest” (111 *et seq.*). The phrase “a lot of pink-hearted umbels consisting of white, furry stars” seems to meld adult and childlike phraseology. The use of the present tense changes from immediate to general, signifying a sequence of comfortably identical or similar events – “When I come down early in the mornings [...]” – and continues in that mode. “On Sunday afternoon Papa does his accounts [...] Mama sits in the living room with Papa, reading the *Münchener Neueste Nachrichten* [...]” (*Emigrants* 199) shows the “leading characters” of the “theater of the past that is constituted by memory” centre stage as the scene is replayed and replayed (Bachelard, *Space* 30, 36). Commenting on Bachelard, and relevant to passages like this, Conrad Russell notes that memory, even that of such eidetic clarity as Luisa Lanzberg’s, is not a photographic record, but is “cinematic,” “fictive,” and, as has been mentioned before,

closely involves the imagination (11, 14).

When the memoir narrative moves away from her early life in Steinach there is at once a change of grammatical tense. It enters with this statement: “childhood ended in January 1905 when the house and fields were auctioned off and we moved into a new three-storey house in Kissingen [...]” and is signaled by the use of past tenses (*Emigrants* 207). These continue throughout the description of life in Bad Kissingen. The immediate experience of memory has changed in the way the memoirist feels it. She says that it is difficult to think back to her youth in that town, and that “there is a good deal I can no longer picture” (208). Despite that protestation, however, the reminiscences continue for another nine pages or so. The change in tone has, obliquely, answered the basic phenomenological question, “What [was] this experience like?” (van Manen 811), and it is answered more directly where the memoirist mentions that on reading a postcard album she “felt like a visitor, passing through” (*Emigrants* 210).

During an isolated day of summer happiness in Kissingen, Luisa Lanzberg overtakes two Russian gentlemen and “a boy of about ten who had been chasing butterflies” (213). Thus she encounters, on his eccentric, zig-zag trajectory through the book, Sebald’s most enigmatic traveller in time and space – the Butterfly Man. The presence of this unnamed lepidopterist, as a kind of ‘Wandering Gentle’ amongst the mainly Jewish and part-Jewish characters, assumed to be and indeed acknowledged almost apologetically by Sebald to be Vladimir Nabokov, is largely unexplained. Nabokov’s wife was Jewish of course, and his travels through and out of Europe during the early mid-twentieth century gave him a unique perspective on the rise of Nazism, its racially destructive policies, and the experience of people forced to flee it. Even so, his presence could be speculated as a reminder that Jewish and gentile

strata of society were, despite Nazi claims, inextricable, and that also one could be a gentile *déraciné*. However, Sebald himself would not offer much of an explanation of the way that the mysterious and the realistic were interwoven in *The Emigrants*. All we have from him about the Butterfly Man is, in effect, this quote, embedded in an article by Oliver Sill:

“Daher muß es solche halb greifbaren, halb abstrakten Figuren geben (wie den Schmetterlingsfänger), die eine bestimmte, nicht ganz zu durchschauende Funktion haben.” (Sill 599, “So there have to be such half-tangible, half-abstract characters – like the butterfly-catcher – that have a definite but not entirely transparent function.”

[my translation])

This could be seen as a device entirely in harmony with Sebald’s “spectral materialism” (Santner 52) as previously noted in Chapter 2.

This lack of full transparency is evident in that the Butterfly Man does not need to be, and might not actually be, Nabokov. The first-identified character with an interest in insects is one Edwin Elliott (*Emigrants* 12), but there are no further clues that might identify him as the traveller, apart from an approximation of age. The second-identified character is Dr. Henry Selwyn, whom the narrator sees in a projected photograph in knee-length shorts with a shoulder bag and a butterfly net (15), and is therefore positively identified as a, if not the, Butterfly Man. The narrator notices a striking resemblance between that photo of Selwyn, and one of Nabokov that he had previously clipped from a magazine (16). At that point in the text Sebald inserts a photograph; because it is captionless it may or may not be the photo referred to in the text, and there is no clue given as to whether it is Selwyn, Nabokov, or a third party. An internet search nowadays would establish that it is in fact Nabokov, but no such facility was widely available at the time that *The Emigrants* was written and published, and the inserted photograph brings with it a sense of uncertainty. In

fact, in noting the resemblance of the clipped photo to the projected photo, the narrator has been the first person within the novel's discourse time to encounter a/the Butterfly Man and, in that instant, to make the association that answered van Manen's already cited question, "What is [seeing this image] like?" The issue of whom we are to take as being the Butterfly Man who subsequently appears throughout the novel is not relevant to that instantaneous experience.

It does, however, lead on to consideration of the further encounters as phenomena. In the Ambros Adelwarth section of the novel the ephemeral traveller's presence is poignant, as it comes at a time when the personality of the once widely-travelled Uncle Adelwarth is deteriorating, and the mental and physical space he inhabits is contracting. He is more-or-less confined to his own room and the ECT treatment room in the sanatorium in Ithaca. In the former he seems obsessed with looking out of his window for a strange but regular visitor in the nearby landscape; Aunt Fini reports standing with him and seeing "a middle-aged man [...] holding a white net on a pole in front of him and occasionally taking curious jumps" (104). The sight has intruded on her recalling a resemblance between the view from the window and one of the Altagh marsh in Austria, and has caused bewilderment by its incongruity. Uncle Adelwarth remarks "It's the butterfly man, you know. He comes round here quite often" (*ibid.*). The apparition remains unnamed, although as Nabokov lived in Ithaca from 1953 to 1961 the likelihood of correlating him with the ephemeral lepidopterist is strong; however, as so often with Sebald, this is a vague tease, as who is to say that the well-travelled Dr. Selwyn could not have hunted butterflies during a vacation in New York State as easily as he could have in Crete? But the attempt to catch the butterfly, a metaphor for the human mind and soul, is what gives this episode its poignancy and irony – that shortly afterwards "the extent

of the harm that had been done [by ECT] to Uncle's spirit and body was becoming clearer" (ibid.). The Butterfly Man is linked to Uncle Adelwarth's final retreat into his contracted personal place, when he misses the appointment for what was to be his final ECT session, and is found by his doctor staring out of the window; he excuses himself with "It must have slipped my mind whilst I was waiting for the butterfly man" (115). There is no clue there whether the awaited event actually happened, whether the Butterfly Man actually did make an appearance on Uncle Adelwarth's last day. In this section of the novel the unmarked integration of quotes into the overall narrative, as noted already by Lynn Wolff (320) in Chapter 1 of this dissertation, causes that narrative to slide without interruption from the narrator's consciousness to the subject's via two separate levels of periscopy, without disrupting the received perception of an inevitable flow of instants with their attendant associations.

In the Max Ferber section, that perception is shifted to another medium, that of painting. Ferber's studio in Manchester recalls, in its constriction and confinement, Ambros Adelwarth's room in the sanatorium, the hospital room of the narrator in *The Rings of Saturn* (3-5), and more particularly Janine Dakyns's study with its piles of paper (8-9). The build-up of clutter in Ferber's room was not uniform, as that in Dakyns's, but made up of a plethora of put-aside objects (*Emigrants* 160-161), and principally of a mixture of dust and flakes of paint, the latter the by-product of Ferber's constant effacement with a palette knife and reapplication of paint:

This, said Ferber, was the true product of his continuing endeavours and the most palpable proof of his failure. It had always been of the greatest importance to him [...] that nothing should change at his place of work, that everything should remain as it was, as he had arranged it, and that nothing further should be added but the debris generated by painting and the dust that continuously fell and which, as he was coming to realize, he loved more than anything else in the

world.

(161)

Ferber had been one of the Jewish children taken out of Germany by the ‘Kindertransport’. His vector had been a one-way trajectory, and had led inexorably to this almost total confinement – “I cannot leave [Manchester], I do not want to leave, I must not [...] I often don’t leave the house or workshop for weeks on end” (169) – and to the loss of his German language and identity and any sense of what his former country might have become (181-182). He had attempted to travel in the past, and it was on a mountainside near Lake Geneva that he had encountered the Butterfly Man. He might not have resisted the urge to hurl himself from the mountain

[...] had not a man of about sixty suddenly appeared before him – like someone who’s popped out of the bloody ground. He was carrying a large white gauze butterfly net and said, in an English voice that was refined but quite unplaceable, that it was time to be thinking of going down if one were to be in Montreux in time for dinner.

(174)

The period between that encounter and his eventual return to his studio, so striking was the event itself, had become since then lost in a “lagoon of oblivion” (ibid.). he had tried to recapture it by working for a full year on a “faceless” portrait of “Man with a Butterfly Net” (ibid.), but despite both the apparent significance and memorability of the event, and the intent in his imagination to realise the work of art, all he succeeded in producing was more scraped-off flakes of paint on his studio floor. Thus the Butterfly Man remained faceless and unidentified, his unplaceable accent possibly that of the Russian Nabokov or the Lithuanian Selwyn. This non-identification and the ceaseless attempt to recall by the medium of paint may well be one of Sebald’s many ways of emblematising the great losses of the twentieth century, but equally the lived experience of painting and scraping in the confining

studio has in its own right, for Ferber, taken on an instant-to-instant significance. The application and effacement of paint is, by use of a specific expressive medium, an answer to the question “what is the experience of forgetting like?”

Identifying the butterfly-chasing boy of about ten in Luisa Lanzberg’s account as Nabokov is again a matter of conjecture. The encounter took place in the year she turned twenty-one, and if she was sixteen in 1905 (195) that would make its date 1910 when Nabokov was indeed about ten or eleven. But it is not so much that that is significant, but the later event in 1913 when her friend Fritz Waldhof proposes to her:

I did not know what to reply, but I nodded, and, though everything else around me blurred, I saw that long-forgotten Russian boy as clearly as anything, leaping about the meadows with his butterfly net; I saw him as a messenger of joy, returning from that distant summer day to open his specimen box and release the most beautiful red admirals, peacock butterflies, brimstones and tortoiseshells to signal my final liberation.

(214)

This is precisely what I was referring to in Chapter 1 when I mentioned ‘associations’. What each instant is threshold to is neither predictable nor superficially logical. The marriage proposal evokes and releases the apparently unrelated yet eidetic image of the earlier event, which itself releases a creatively-imagined, almost oneiric pageant of colourful butterflies. The associations are free associations, and Luisa is providing yet another answer to the basic phenomenological question, with the butterflies standing for what her experience of joy and liberation is like.

The unpredictability extends to these co-incidences of the Butterfly Man’s trajectory with those of the eponymous emigrants. When Joseph Cuomo commented that it was remarkable that Sebald never used these coincidences toward some end, the author responded “Well it would trivialize it. Nevertheless it has significance” (Cuomo 97). He rejected the retrospective arrangement of coincidences, in the style of

an Agatha Christie novel, as mere “sleight of hand” (Sebald and Zeeman 26). He stated that the presence of such things as the newspaper story about the man, a friend of Dr. Selwyn, whose body was recovered from a glacier (*Emigrants* 23) was meant “to unsettle the reader” (Sebald and Zeeman 26). This will be touched upon further in the final chapter of this dissertation. The narrative style of *The Emigrants*, with its barely signaled movement from one consciousness to another, is an attempt to convey the state of mind of those set adrift by forces beyond their understanding and control, the narrator and each character being, to some extent, a loner with no one else ultimately to rely upon (Simic 146), such being the life forced upon an *Auswanderer*.

Chapter 4

Austerlitz: Ellipticity

In *The Emigrants*, Sebald used the disintegration of his characters – Ambros Adelwarth's succumbing to ECT, Max Ferber's self-confinement to Manchester and to his studio, and the suicides of Henry Selwyn and Paul Bereyter – as emblems for the irrecoverable loss of European Jewry, of its culture, and of its integration in the strata of society. Considering that the attitude of Nazism to the Jews of central Europe, whether emigrants or deportees to the concentration camps, may be summed up by the phrase from the bureaucracy of Theresienstadt "*Rückkehr Nicht Erwünscht*" – "Return Not Desired" (*Austerlitz* 338) – it seems surprising that the vectors of at least two of the *Ausgewanderten*, Paul Bereyter and Jacques Austerlitz, have an element of the ellipse. For the purpose of this dissertation, Jacques Austerlitz will, for many reasons which will become clear during this chapter, be counted as one of Sebald's eponymous emigrants, as the book which carries his name as a title returns directly to the author's/narrator's concern and theme of the Jewish and Jewish-associated *déracinés*. The fact that both Bereyter and Austerlitz made journeys back to a personal point of origin lends irony to the Nazi dictum, and both men may be counted as much as *Zurückgewanderten* as *Ausgewanderten*. This is not to say either that their elliptical vectors can be called regular or direct, nor that the perigee of their ellipses brought about an optimal resolution. In the case of Paul Bereyter it brought him to a home town in which he felt out of context, and ultimately to his self-destruction. In the case of Jacques Austerlitz a series of elliptical orbits of Prague, both actual and metaphorical, did bring about a realisation – for the narrator at least – that there is an extent to which memories of the lost Jewish strata of central European

society can be recovered, at least for as long as Kindertransport children such as Jacques Austerlitz and Susi Bechhöfer, one of his real-life models, still live; I note in passing and with sadness, however, that Susi Bechhöfer died during the time that this dissertation was being written. To Sebald this concern must have seemed vital, before all trace of European Jewry is lost or only remembered, like the historic Aztec language, by some “ancient perroquet” (*Austerlitz* 210), and it still seems vital in the light of the “virtual Jewishness” and “what passes for Jewish culture” in the late twentieth-century revival of interest (Gruber 43, 5). Ruth Gruber also reminds us that there is “a very fine and dangerous line between appreciating Jews and their culture and mythologizing them” (18), which is in effect little better than creating “a Potemkin village or sham Eldorado” as the Nazis did out of Theresienstadt (*Austerlitz* 341), and which falsifications of history may be why Sebald felt justified in uplifting and fictionalising so many genuine stories in his writings.

One main reason why I take *Austerlitz* and *The Emigrants* together is, as I have mentioned, that the periscopy of both is bracketed and permeated by the consciousness of a peripatetic narrator. In fact it is possible to treat *The Emigrants*, *The Rings of Saturn*, and *Austerlitz* as a single oeuvre because of that travelling narrator, which is more-or-less what this dissertation does. This means that an approach to one text that relies on phenomenology can be argued to be valid for all. There are problems, however, when it comes to looking at the protagonist of *Austerlitz*. Much as Max Ferber does, Jacques finds it near impossible to remember anything about his central European home, having been brought up Welsh and with a new name. Even when he does remember, or at least finds out that he has another identity, much of his conscious mental strength goes into suppressing memory. This should and does pose an obvious difficulty for a project that aims to present memory

as seemingly involuntary strings of associations. Such associations, however, are not uniformly reliable. It is impossible to tell which associations will lead, in the next instant and the next, to further resonances and repercussions, and which will fade or die abruptly giving nothing further. Jacques Austerlitz describes a period in his life when his facility of language failed him:

Now and then a train of thought did succeed in emerging with wonderful clarity inside my head, but I knew even as it formed that I was in no position to record it, for as soon as I so much as picked up my pencil the endless possibilities of language, to which I could once safely abandon myself, became a conglomeration of the most inane phrases.

(173)

What is illustrated here, as much as any kind of internalised dysphasia, is a fading or dying as noted above. When Austerlitz goes on to describe this lived experience as being like an exile returning to a city where he once lived, to be faced with not only a changing townscape but also the loss of meaning in such mundane things as a bus-stop or a back yard (174-175), what emerges is an extended metaphor for how associations can lead to dissociation, in several senses. Austerlitz describes the psychiatric problems relating to this losing touch with language:

[...] this self-censorship of my mind, the constant suppression of the memories surfacing in me [...] demanded ever greater efforts and finally, and unavoidably, led to the almost total paralysis of my linguistic faculties, the destruction of all my notes and sketches, my endless nocturnal peregrinations through London, and the hallucinations which plagued me with increasing frequency up to the point of my nervous breakdown on the summer of 1992. I cannot say exactly how I spent the rest of the year [...]

(198)

To delve into the specific area of mental health is *ultra vires* this dissertation, even though phenomenology has informed and is still informing that discipline; as has been mentioned above, however, although the principles of phenomenology upon which this dissertation relies give the impression of a seamless process/procession, *Austerlitz*

presents us with a principle character who actively resists its supposed naturalness, as if to say that there is nothing that obliges an individual consciousness simply to enter and be swept along by the flow. Jacques Austerlitz appears to struggle against his own observation that “[w]e take almost all the decisive steps in our lives as a result of slight inner adjustments of which we are barely conscious” (ibid.); even so his struggle may not always have been a deliberate one: “I realized then [...] how little practice I had in using my memory, and conversely how hard I must always have tried to recollect as little as possible [...]” (197). As he diverts from his real memories to the “compensatory memory” of his studies, he comes to inhabit, in effect, a smaller and smaller mental space (198).

Related to this constraint of mental space are both the constraint on his physical space and his concept of time. Regarding the former, his own university study “was like a stock-room of books and papers with hardly any space left for himself, let alone his students” (43), recalling Janine Dakyns’s room (*Rings of Saturn* 8) or even Max Ferber’s studio with its collection of bric-a-brac and layers of paint-flakes (*Emigrants* 160-161), or, by extension, Gwendolyn Elias’s room full of her powder (*Austerlitz* 86) and the pigeon loft at Königswart full of droppings and dead birds (302) the memory of which overwhelmed thoughts of Robert Schumann’s cell in Godesberg (301) – such is the intertextuality and intratextuality of Sebald’s writing. Although Austerlitz is not actually confined to his university room, his travels are in pursuit of his studies of the monumental civic architecture of nineteenth-century Europe, examples of which, though often brutally massive, have their own spatial issues. The Palace of Justice in Brussels, for example, though a monstrosity of over seven hundred thousand cubic metres, is so constrained by the symmetry of its design concept, that it contains corridors and stairways leading nowhere, doorless rooms and

halls, and empty spaces surrounded by walls (39). He describes to the narrator how he “had stopped at one of the windows set deep in the walls to look out over the leaden grey roofs of the palace, crammed together like pack ice, and down into ravines and shaft-like interior courtyards never penetrated by any ray of light” (ibid.). His conflation of the architecture with natural features such as pack ice and ravines answers the basic phenomenological question, which may be rendered here as “What is encountering this monstrosity of architecture like?” It also recalls the narrator’s encounter with the space beyond the hospital window, the inexplicable view from which he likens to looking down from a cliff to an ocean of stone or a field of rubble (*Rings* 5). A common experience of consciousness runs throughout the three works covered by this dissertation.

Austerlitz’s theory of time however, set out over three pages, seems unique to him. He rejects the solar day as imprecise and our reliance on it as reliance on an arbitrary, imaginary, invariable “average sun” (*Austerlitz* 142) and is instantly at odds with the notion of the day as “the most natural measurement of time” (Heidegger 465). He is impatient also with the idea of time as a river:

[...] if Newton really thought that time was a river like the Thames, then where was its source and into what sea does it finally flow? [...] where are the banks of time? What would be this river’s qualities perhaps corresponding to those of water, which is fluid, rather heavy, and translucent? In what way do objects immersed in time differ from those left untouched by it?
(*Austerlitz* 142)

Though time as a metaphorical river may comprehend Newton’s notion of time’s equable flow, it also goes back a lot further to Heraclitus’s aphorism that one cannot step into the same stream twice (Plato 67). This says nothing about the rate of flow, but simply that it does not stand still. Austerlitz’s questions – to which he does not stay for an answer – seem superfluous in the light of Heraclitus; the only “bank” is

where the observer stands, and is itself a metaphor for the perception of a constant present, and whether that observer steps into or merely looks at the river it will have changed instant-by-instant, though it may look the same. Source, sea, qualities, etc. are irrelevant to that view. Maurice Merleau-Ponty says, in his *Phenomenology of Perception*:

If the observer sits in a boat and is carried by the current, we may say that he is moving downstream towards his future, but the future lies in the new landscapes which await him at the estuary, and the course of time is no longer the stream itself; it is the landscape as it rolls by for the moving observer. Time is, therefore, not a real process, nor an actual succession that I am content to record. It arrives from *my* relation to things.

(412)

Although Austerlitz uses the same basic metaphor as Merleau-Ponty, one can imagine his demanding to know where the landing stage is at which the observer boards the boat, and where the estuary is, where the landscapes are, and indeed what the boat is. I will not dwell too much on Merleau-Ponty, as Megan Cawood's 2007 dissertation relates his philosophical stance to *Austerlitz* in depth, and I do not wish to duplicate her work; however I will return to him later in this chapter for one important principle. For now it is enough to note that where he and Austerlitz are more consonant is in their concentration on the first-person experience of time. Austerlitz attempts to reject the governance of time altogether:

And is not human life in many parts of the earth governed to this day less by time than by the weather, and thus by an unquantifiable dimension which disregards linear regularity, does not progress constantly forward but moves in eddies, is marked by episodes of congestion and irruption, recurs in ever-changing form, and evolves in no one knows what direction?

(*Austerlitz* 143)

Thus the changes that time is supposed to measure, Austerlitz claims, are aperiodic and capricious. In this he is much closer to Bachelard, for whom “Time no longer flows. It spouts” (*Instant* 60).

Austerlitz, however, attempts to go much further and rejects the dominance of time altogether. He has never owned a clock or worn a wristwatch, keeping himself apart from time as it is measured, in the hope that:

[...] time will not pass away, has not passed away, that I can turn back and go behind it, and there I shall find everything as it once was, or more precisely, I shall find that all moments of time have coexisted simultaneously, in which case none of what history tells us would be true, past events have not yet occurred but are waiting to do so at the moment when we think of them [...]

(*Austerlitz* 144)

He postulates a kind of retro-time (my coining), a facility for going behind the façade of what is perceived as current and encountering there a co-incidental past-and-future that may be conjured by one’s consciousness. It seems that he is resisting Walter Benjamin’s idea, mentioned in Chapter 2, of history as debris. What he is definitely resisting, however, is *chronos*, which van Manen, citing Heidegger, sees as the kind of time that is “continuity, order, and machination” under the spell of which we live, a time dominated by technology and production in which there is no scope for grasping “human innerness, the imaginal, and the inceptual” (van Manen 821). It is *chronos* that Sebald impishly invokes both by setting Austerlitz’s exposition of time in an environment full of “ingenious observational instruments and measuring devices, quadrants and sextants, chronometers and regulators,” and by closing the episode with the narrator’s noting the clock time (*Austerlitz* 140, 144).

Yet Austerlitz’s lived experience of time is indeed an involuntary and an instantaneous one. When he enters the billiards room at Iver Grove he makes the assumption that “everything was exactly as it *must have been* a hundred and fifty

years before” (149), a statement that is not actually verifiable, hence my emphasis. He goes on to describe being in the room thus: “It was as if time, which usually runs so irrevocably away, had stood still here, as if the years behind us were still to come [...]” (152). Superficially he is expressing his own theory of retro-time, but in fact the ringing “as if” phrases that Sebald gives him root him in the instant and in the basic phenomenological question, though apart from its superficial retention of bygone features there is nothing extraordinary about the room itself, it is simply a space filled – here and now – with old-fashioned furniture. Earlier in this chapter it was noted that the instant-to-instant nature of lived experience does not afford uniformly outstanding associations; the fact that everyday life contains banality is why Heidegger can say that everyday experience is both meaningful and superficial (van Manen 811). Yet what is most arresting in the texts are the passages in which an association is eidetic, where an instant is a threshold for something vivid to spring from memory or imagination, such as Luisa Lanzberg’s calling up of the living room of her childhood home (*Emigrants* 195). I call such instants where the threshold nature is so marked ‘instants of aperture’ – van Manen, as noted before, calls them “imaginal” and “inceptual” (821) – a prominent example of which is Austerlitz’s revelation in the former Ladies’ Waiting Room at Liverpool Street Station (*Austerlitz* 189 *et seq.*). This example occurs at the apogee of one of Austerlitz’s ellipses; he is back in Britain, his foster-nation and therefore his furthest point of cultural and geographical travel from his origin, and his reverie on Liverpool Street is taking him to times and places other than his own life, so he is not actively considering his own past. By ‘reverie’ I mean “an oneiric activity in which a glimmer of consciousness subsists” (Bachelard, *Reverie* 150) and in which the *rêvant* is physically present.

Austerlitz's physical presence, in another sense, confronting the space of the Waiting Room with its physical confines, contributes to the instant of aperture. Here I bring in the principle I referred to earlier:

[...] this table bears traces of my past life, for I have carved my initials on it and spilt ink on it. But these traces in themselves do not refer to the past; they are present; and in so far as I find in them signs of some 'previous' event, it is because I derive my sense of the past from elsewhere, *because I carry this particular significance within myself*.

(Merleau-Ponty 413, my emphasis)

The extraordinariness that was lacking in the billiard room at Iver Grove is here in the Waiting Room, not by some retention of its own, not by some kind of psychometric property, but by the significances that Austerlitz carries around within him. Sebald himself said "[t]he past is what we carry with us" (Scott & McCulloh 23). "From time to time," says Austerlitz, "and just for a split second," he has visions of architectural features which, unlike the Palace of Justice, open up and lead into the far distance (Austerlitz 190), and throngs of tiny people "like prisoners in search of some way of escape" (191). He feels "as if the room where I stood were expanding, going on for ever and ever in an improbably foreshortened perspective" (ibid.). At this instant, for Austerlitz, time and space seem to have lost their conventional meaning and he feels that he inhabits his retro-time; he has an eidetic mental image of his meeting with his foster parents:

[...] two middle-aged people dressed in the style of the thirties, a woman in a light gabardine coat with a hat at an angle on her head, and a thin man beside her wearing a dark suit and a dog-collar. And I not only saw the minister and his wife, said Austerlitz, I also saw the boy they had come to meet. He was sitting by himself on a bench over to one side, his legs, in white knee-length socks, did not reach the floor, and but for the small rucksack he was holding on his lap I don't think I would have known him, said Austerlitz. I recognized him by that rucksack of his, and for the first time in as far back as I can remember I

recollected myself as a small child, at the moment when I realized that it must have been to this same waiting-room I had come on my arrival in England over half a century ago.

(193)

However, notwithstanding the remembered meeting's authenticity, this is fictive memory, filled out if not wholly created by his imagination. He does not see as he saw then, but looks on at himself as a spectator would watching Bachelard's "theater of the past" (*Space* 30). This passage brings together the four phenomenological concepts I mentioned in chapter 1: event, place, vector, and object. Event and place, the instantaneous emergence of this memory, and the space in which the instant occurs have a significance carried to them by Austerlitz himself. The vector is the particular elliptical journey to them, its reaching the apogee from which point the course will be back towards the perigee, the significance of the journey emerging through the event and the place again by what Austerlitz has carried with him. The object, literally carried with him, is his ubiquitous rucksack, his dependence upon which throughout his life is now made clear by its presence in the quasi-theatrical memory.

The novel itself, however, does not end with any such theatricality. It does not even end with the presence of Austerlitz himself, but with the sense that it is the narrator who had been on an elliptical vector throughout. He has travelled from the magnificent, domed great hall of the Centraal Station, where he first saw Austerlitz sitting like an erect Siegfried amongst a collection of "miniaturized" *Nibelungen*-like passengers (*Austerlitz* 6), via all his encounters with his semi-fictitious protagonist, to their last meeting where Austerlitz tells him of the "almost dwarf-like woman" who was the caretaker at the Alderney Street cemetery (409). With that in his mind, the narrator goes not to that cemetery but to Antwerp and Machelen, walking ten

kilometres from there to Willebroek in a reverie in which he, like Austerlitz *in parvo*, forgets most of what he saw on the way (411). At the fortifications of Breendonk he immerses himself, and the reader of the novel, in some details from Dan Jacobson's *Heshel's Kingdom*, which Austerlitz had given to him at their first meeting, thus bearing periscopic witness to the significance which he, Sebald/narrator, has carried with him throughout. Once again we can refer to André Aciman's note in "Out of Novemberland," to the effect that whilst Sebald does not talk directly about the Holocaust, we think of nothing else (6). It is the "*neuf cent français*" and the names of Lob, Abram, and Stern scratched on a wall that he leaves us with (415) – not the industrial homicide of the Holocaust itself but the ephemera of people who once made up strata integral to the sociology and culture of central Europe, and who, Sebald reminds us by allowing Austerlitz to fade from the novel that bears his name, have been allowed to fade from history.

Chapter 5

Coincidentiality

The core chapters of this dissertation have presented three Sebald texts as, in effect, a continuous work demonstrating the phenomenological experience, and a phenomenological approach to the creation of literature. Rather than simply functioning as a conventional summary and conclusion, this briefer final chapter will ask first of all, where that presentation as a hypothesis can be challenged and where it can be further supported. It has already been noted that whilst the experience of phenomena can only be a first-person one, Sebald relies heavily on periscopy. It has also been noted that the experience is instantaneous, whereas *The Rings of Saturn*, for example, apparently took two to three years from the walking tour, via the assembly of notes, to publication in English. The preceding chapters have given sufficient evidence of the phenomenological approach and content, but the deliberation of Sebald's process of creation has also to be kept in mind. The level of deliberation involved is increased when translation is considered. British writer and filmmaker Iain Sinclair reminds us that when we read *The Rings of Saturn* "we're not even reading Sebald's book, we're reading a book by Michael Hulse [...] There's a strategy that [Sebald] doesn't write directly in English. He writes in German, and then it's translated" (*Patience*). The presence of Michael Hulse that markedly in the process of creation would seem to take us one step further from the "raw, prereflective, nonreflective" nature of experience (van Manen 812). Sinclair pointedly refers to the process as a "strategy," signifying planning and forethought, rather than spontaneity, on the part of writer and translators. A letter from Sebald to Hulse in 1994, regarding a section of *The Emigrants*, introduces yet another person into the process:

Over the last couple of weeks I have looked through the Selwyn story once more together with Beryl Ranwell who has often helped me in the past with that sort of work. We made several more minor changes, often where I found that the German text was a little flawed or could otherwise be adjusted so that unnecessary difficulties could be avoided. I enclose a copy of amended version as well as your text with marks showing where changes were made. I hope you will find this all right. It was only through working on the text myself that I fully came to appreciate your excellent translation, the way in which you found the right tone & the skill with which you got round the many difficulties the original presents.

(Sebald, Correspondence)

Beryl Ranwell was a secretary at the University of East Anglia, who worked firstly in the Russian Sector of the School of European Studies, and thereafter in the German Sector. During her time there she assisted Sebald with translations from German into English, and he publicly acknowledged her vital role, saying “she has a good ear for English – which I certainly don’t” (Turner). Sebald’s acknowledgement of Hulse as, in effect, the owner of the finished work-in-translation is there in the simple expression “I hope you will find this all right.” Sebald thereby puts himself at arm’s length from the finished work.

A further indication of how the minutiae of Sebald’s texts were given attention can be seen in the way the epigraph that precedes “Dr. Henry Selwyn” – “Zerstört das Letzte die Erinnerung nicht” (*Ausgewanderten* 5) – migrates via “Destroy not the last of memory” to “And the last remnants memory destroys” (Hulse), neither of which is a precise translation and the final one arguably reverses the sense of the original. However, chapter 3 of this dissertation has drawn attention not simply to the disruptive effect of some of Hulse’s minor quirks of translation in *The Emigrants*, but also to the way in which one example allowed a manipulation and foreshortening of time. This compliments the way in which space or perspective is often foreshortened

in the texts. Hulse's presence as translator, or Anthea Bell's in the case of *Austerlitz*, may add another stage to the overall periscopy, but the preceding chapters of this dissertation evidence that this does not detract from what Sebald is trying to achieve – from his documentary purpose of highlighting the ignored barbarities of the twentieth century, “the ethical necessity of bearing witness to the present and the past” (Cooke 145). This dissertation has already noted that Sebald keeps the Holocaust in the minds of readers (Aciman 6); Simon Cooke gives the following opinion in *Travellers' Tales of Wonder*:

Sebald's work, for all the self-conscious and arguably postmodern sense of the relativity of experience, seems guided at all times by a wish not to trespass on the experience itself. The consciousness of the mediatedness of the account, both visually and textually, never strives for telekinetic or appropriative intensity, but rather points outside its own frame of reference towards that which cannot be captured. [...] Sebald's forms of witness strive for a kind of receptivity that [...] evokes, rather than contains, the experiences of others.
(149-150)

Although Cooke doubts the phenomenological directness of the texts, using terms such as “trespass” and “appropriative,” he cannot deny that Sebald “evokes” the experiences; and if the experiences can be evoked, then so can the associations that every successive experience brings with it. Far from being a stumbling block to what Sebald is trying to achieve, Sebald's writing “literally comes into being [...] through acts of translation” (164). Translators often try to convey as much as possible of the culture of the originator; thus one would expect more than a hint of German-ness in a Hulse or Bell translation. However, what is often produced is something shorn of that sense of the narrator's exotism, by virtue again of careful attention to minutiae. Hence “der ostenglische Stadt Norwich” (*Ausgewanderten* 7) becomes simply “Norwich” (*Emigrants* 3). Thus a text emerges that in effect does not separate the reader from the

narrator by culture or ethnicity, but further helps to collapse the possible distancing inherent in periscopy.

It is to such detailing as mentioned above that Lynne Sharon Schwartz refers when she writes of Sebald's "dreamlike narratives, meandering yet meticulous [...]" (9). Some narratives within the texts refer directly to oneiric experience, such as Max Ferber's dream about a man with a model of Solomon's temple at Jerusalem which he took from ghetto to ghetto – a miniaturisation taken from microcosm to microcosm, each a constriction of space (*Emigrants* 176). There is an intra/intertextual link between that dream and the meeting between the narrator of *The Rings of Saturn* and the builder of an actual scale model of the same temple, noted in chapter 2 of this dissertation. This now draws our attention to the more general factor in the texts under consideration, the use of coincidence. Chapter 3 noted that Sebald had an ambivalent attitude towards coincidence, disliking the sleight of hand that tied coincidences neatly together in popular murder mysteries; using a coincidence to some end "would trivialize it," he said, admitting that nevertheless coincidences in his writing had significance (Cuomo 97). This dissertation has already noted the recurrences like those of the constrained space of cluttered rooms, of domed structures, and of the unfamiliar views from on high. Michaël Zeeman's interview confronted Sebald over the far-fetchedness of the narrator's being told the story of alpine guide Johannes Naegli falling from a mountain many years before (*Emigrants* 15) and being in the neighbourhood seventy or eighty years afterwards when his body is recovered, and moreover being about to lay aside a newspaper carrying the account when realising it is the same man (23); to this confrontation, Sebald replied "That's his story. Well, I mean, this is also to unsettle the reader of course" (Sebald and Zeeman 26). This coincidence in itself not only unsettles the reader, of course, but sets up the

expectation of further coincidences, especially the expectation that the Butterfly Man encountered later throughout *The Emigrants* is in fact Selwyn, and that there will be some sort of resolution or explanation of the encounters. The fact that there is none turns attention back to the actual experience of the encounters, as noted in chapter 3. There are smaller unresolved coincidences, such as the discovery of master dyer Seybolt, whose name and possible Bavarian origin is tantalisingly close to Sebald's own (*Rings* 287), hinting at but never revealing a more direct connection. However, it is in *Austerlitz* where coincidence is put under most strain. Austerlitz is led to the place of his major instant of aperture, the old waiting room at Liverpool Street Station by "a series of coincidences" (195), having felt that he had been bidden to enter it by a station worker in a white turban who acted almost like a *deus ex machina*, or at least a catalyst to the story (188-189). The narrator speaks of Austerlitz's "unexpected return" (54), but covers the contrived coincidences of their repeated meetings – which are necessary within the structure of the book for Austerlitz to tell his whole story – by saying "Contrary to all statistical probability, then, there was an astonishing, positively imperative internal logic to his meeting me here" (60). This is almost to acknowledge Austerlitz's apparent belief in an agency greater than or superior to his own capacity for thought, and which directs operations somewhere in his brain (*ibid.*) as being responsible also for bringing them together.

This stretching of coincidences stands beside what can be considered the least credible occurrence in *Austerlitz* – the reconnection with the Czech language.

Austerlitz recounts "now [I] understood almost everything Věra said, like a deaf man whose hearing had been miraculously restored" (219). We are meant to accept that a man should 'remember', sixty years later, more than the vocabulary and syntax familiar to a very young child, particularly if he has up to then been struggling to

stammer out learnt Czech phrases (215), particularly a man who had previously likened himself to someone who had forgotten what a bus-stop or back yard was (175). However, what is being conveyed here is an instant of aperture of great intensity. This is borne out by the typically Sebaldian “as if” phrase, though here it is introduced by “like.” We can choose to take literally what Austerlitz says about his rediscovered facility with Czech, or we can accept this as yet another answer to the basic phenomenological question, and see his statement as a description of what the experience is like. The unsettling effect that Sebald has been aiming for in episodes like this, and in the coincidences, is to prompt the reader to see how much one thing was like another, “as if” a view in *The Rings of Saturn* is a view in *Austerlitz*, or “as if” an artist’s studio in *The Emigrants* is a pigeon loft in *Austerlitz* and so on. Coincidence becomes co-incidence, there is “[an] interconnection of different times and places in one another” (Cooke 163), and the significance that Sebald himself cited in his conversation with Joseph Cuomo is carried not only by the narrator[s] and characters, but now by the reader to each coincidence. The documentary film *Patience: After Sebald* contains the reactions of several notable readers of *The Rings of Saturn*. In the film, Barbara Hui and Rick Moody deal with Sebald’s intention to unsettle the reader by focusing on aspects of the interconnection that Cooke refers to. Hui’s ‘Litmap’ project takes all the places visited and connected them by straight lines to every other place mentioned in the text. Moody responds to the narrator’s mental pilgrimage by linking themes in flowcharts. Superficially, both reactions seem to be a retreat into linearity, but rather they are attempts to come to terms with the unfamiliarity and unpredictability of phenomenological associations. Lise Patt is well aware of the linear nature of a narrative, but also of the way this can be disrupted; she reports being struck by the subtle repetition of shapes in images on

pages 57 and 58 of *The Rings of Saturn*, and then coming across the stark interruption of the double page image on pages 60 and 61, which drew her back to the photo on page 54, and caused her to retrace her steps. “It’s very hard to do this [...] to use [...] the linearity of a book, and to use the images to pull you back. That’s why it’s like a journey even as you’re reading it, because you’re constantly having to go back” (*Patience*). This is not unique in the texts. On pages 10 to 13 of *Austerlitz* the reader has to give in to either doggedly following the narrative, or accepting the diversions afforded by images and footnotes; even following the narrative leads to the minor puzzle of an untranslated motto in Dutch. Sebald again is deliberate in the way he evokes the tangential and disruptive nature of associations.

This point brings the ‘peripatesis’ of the dissertation to an end. Its vector has been, as I said at the start, a peregrinatory one. That has been necessary to convey the connectedness of and within the three texts, to demonstrate that there is sufficient evidence, despite the potential challenges, to support a phenomenological approach to Sebald, and to show that such an approach has both value and validity. Throughout the parts of the text that have been examined, the importance of the experience of the instant as a threshold to resonances, repercussions, and associations has been shown. In concluding this dissertation and, for the time being, this project, I am well aware that there is much ground still to cover. To reiterate its purpose, the door for further study of this nature is now open wider, and I have no doubt that it is a threshold that will be crossed again.

Works cited

- Aciman, André. "Out of Novemberland." *New York Review of Books*, vol.45 No.19, 1998, pp.6-7. tinyurl.com/Novemberland. Accessed 13th April 2018.
- Bachelard, Gaston. *Intuition of the Instant*. Translated by Eileen Rizo-Patron, Northwestern UP, 2013.
- . *The Poetics of Reverie: Childhood, Language, and the Cosmos*. Translated by Daniel Russell, Beacon Press, 1971.
- . *The Poetics of Space*. Translated by Marie Jolas, Penguin Classics, 2014.
- Benjamin, Walter. *Illuminations*. Translated by Harry Zohn, edited by Hannah Arendt, Schocken, 1968.
- Bergson, Henri. *Time and Free Will: an essay on the immediate data of consciousness*. Translated by F. L. Pogson, The Macmillan Co. 1910.
- Botez, Catalina. "Tragic Travels and Postmnemonic Alterity in W.G. Sebald's *Austerlitz*: A Peratologic Analysis." *Literature & Aesthetics* vol.21 No.2, 2011, pp.148-159. tinyurl.com/ybtmdnxl. Accessed 19th February 2018.
- Cawood, Megan. *Landscape, Memory, and Time in W.G. Sebald's Austerlitz*. Dissertation, University of Cape Town, 2007. tinyurl.com/ybju6hjh. Accessed 19th February 2018.
- Clingman, Stephen. *The Grammar of Identity: Transnational Fiction and the Nature of the Boundary*. OUP, 2009.
- Cooke, Simon. *Travellers' Tales of Wonder: Chatwin, Naipaul, Sebald*. Edinburgh UP, 2013.
- Cuomo, Joseph. "A Conversation with W.G. Sebald." *The emergence of memory: Conversations with W.G. Sebald*, edited by Lynne Sharon Schwartz, Seven Stories Press, 2007, pp.93-117.

- Franklin, Ruth. "Rings of Smoke." *The emergence of memory: Conversations with W.G. Sebald*, edited by Lynne Sharon Schwartz, Seven Stories Press, 2007, pp.119-143.
- Gray, Richard T. "Writing at the Roche Limit: Order and Entropy in W G Sebald's *Die Ringe des Saturn*." *The German Quarterly*, vol.83 No.1, 2010, pp.38-57. www.jstor.org/stable/25653644. Accessed 27th December 2017.
- Gruber, Ruth Ellen. *Virtually Jewish: Reinventing Jewish Culture in Europe*. University of California Press, 2002
- Heidegger, Martin. *Basic Problems of Phenomenology*. Continuum, 2013.
- Holub, Robert. "Phenomenology," *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism, Volume 8*. Cambridge UP, 1995, pp.289-318.
- Hulse, Michael. Typescript English translations of "Dr. Henry Selwyn" with annotations by W.G. Sebald, unpublished, 1995, Harvard University Library MS Eng 1632 (2) ff.1-3. Copies obtained direct from HU Library 17th May 2012.
- Jaggi, Maya. "The Last Word: interview with W.G. Sebald." *The Guardian*, 21st December 2001, p.4. tinurl.com/5wonq8. Accessed 23rd April 2018.
- Long, Jonathan J. "History, narrative, and photography in W.G. Sebald's *Die Ausgewanderten*." *Modern Language Review*, vol.98 No.1, 2003, pp.117-137. dro.dur.ac.uk/688/1/688.pdf. Accessed 14th May 2018.
- van Manen, Max. "Phenomenology in its Original Sense." *Qualitative Health Research*, vol.27 No.6, 2017, pp.810-825. DOI: 10.1177/1049732317699381. Accessed 20th April 2018.
- McCulloh, Mark. *Understanding W.G. Sebald*. University of South Carolina Press, 2003.

- Merleau-Ponty, Maurice. *The Phenomenology of Perception*. Translated by Colin Smith. Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1962.
- Mitchell, Derek. *Everyday Phenomenology*. Cambridge Scholars, 2012.
- Patience (After Sebald)*. Directed by Grant Gee, Illumination Films, 2012.
- Plato. *Cratylus; Parmenides; Greater Hippias; Lesser Hippias*. Translated by Harold North Fowler, Harvard UP, 1926, Loeb Classical Library online version. tinyurl.com/PlatoCratylus. Accessed 27th June 2019.
- Russell, Conrad. "Fictive Time – Bachelard on Memory, Duration and Consciousness." *KronoScope*, vol.5, no.1, 2005, pp.3-19. 10.1163/1568240540055258. Accessed 8th May 2018.
- Santner, Eric L. *On Creaturely Life: Rilke / Benjamin / Sebald*. University of Chicago Press, 2006.
- Schütte, Uwe. "Out of the Shadows." *Times Higher Education*, 22nd September 2011, pp.44-47. [Photocopy courtesy of Dr. Schütte.]
- Schwartz, Lynne Sharon. Introduction. *The emergence of memory: Conversations with W.G. Sebald*, edited by Schwartz, Seven Stories Press, 2007, pp.9-22.
- Sebald, Winfried G. *Die Ausgewanderten*. Fischer, 2006 imprint.
- . *Austerlitz*. Translated by Anthea Bell, reissued with an introduction by James Wood, Penguin, 2011.
- . Correspondence with Michael Hulse, unpublished letter dated 1994, Harvard University Library, MS Eng 1632 (1). Copy obtained direct from HU Library 17th May 2012.
- . *The Emigrants*. Translated by Michael Hulse, Vintage, 1996.
- . *The Rings of Saturn*. Translated by Michael Hulse, Vintage, 2002.

- Sebald, W.G., and Michaël Zeeman. "Transcript of an interview given by Max Sebald." *W.G. Sebald: History – Memory – Trauma*, edited by Scott Denham and Mark McCulloh. Walter de Gruyter, 2006, pp.22-29.
- Shakespeare, William. *Hamlet*. The Arden Shakespeare edition, Bloomsbury, 2006.
- Sill, Oliver. "'Aus dem Jäger ist ein Schmetterling Geworden.'" *Textbeziehungen zwischen Werken von W.G. Sebald, Franz Kafka und Vladimir Nabokov.* *Poetica*, vol.29 No.3/4, 1997, pp.596-623. www.jstor.org/stable/43028149. Accessed 15th May 2018.
- Simic, Charles. "Conspiracy of Silence." *The emergence of memory: Conversations with W.G. Sebald*, edited by Lynne Sharon Schwartz, Seven Stories Press, 2007, pp.145-158.
- Tseti, Angeliki. "Historiography in Photo-textuality: The Representation of Trauma in W.G. Sebald's *The Emigrants*." *Synthesis* No.8, 2015, pp.99-117. tinyurl.com/SebaldTseti. Accessed 10th May 2018.
- Turner, Gordon. "Beryl Ranwell obituary." *The Guardian* online, 1st July 2013. tinyurl.com/BerylRanwell. Accessed 5th July 2018.
- Williams, Arthur. "'Das korsakowsche Syndrom': Remembrance and Responsibility in W.G. Sebald." *German Culture and the Uncomfortable Past: Representations of National Socialism in contemporary Germanic Literature*, edited by Helmut Schmitz, Ashgate, 2001, pp.65-86.
- Wolff, Lynn. "Literary Historiography: W.G. Sebald's Fiction." *Amsterdamer Beiträge zur Neueren Germanistik*, vol.72 No.1, 2009, pp.317-330. tinyurl.com/SebaldFiction. Accessed 10th May 2018.